

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 01810 271721Z

46

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 EB-07 TRSE-00 COME-00 DOTE-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 IGA-02 /030 W

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R 271345Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8731

INFO AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 1810

FOR AF AND AFR

NAIROBI FOR REDSO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, ETRN, BC

SUBJECT: BOTSWANA - TRANSPORT RECONNAISSANCE

REF: A) STATE 229734; B) MBABANE 1649 (NOTAL)

C) GABORONE 1791 (NOTAL), D) MBABANE 1706 (NOTAL)

1. EMBASSY AND OSARAC WELCOME TRANSPORT RECONNAISSANCE PROJECT, AND ANTICIPATE THAT TRANSPORT RECONNAISSANCE TEAM WOULD, IN PRINCIPLE, FIND POSITIVE RECEPTION FROM GOB OFFICIALS. HOWEVER, WE STRONGLY URGE THAT MISSION BE POSTPONED UNTIL GOB CAN BE BRIEFED ON PROJECTED VISIT AND ITS CONCURRENCE OBTAINED.

2. PRIOR GOB BRIEFING AND CONCURRENCE NECESSARY TO GAIN FULL COOPERATION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES WITH TEAM AND TO HELP PREVENT EXCESSIVE GOB EXPECTATIONS BY GIVING PICTURE OF WHAT CAN BE REALISTICALLY EXPECTED FROM THE US AT PRESENT TIME. WE BELIEVE BRIEFING SHOULD INCLUDE RUNDOWN ON KINDS OF QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED BY TEAM AND OF WHOM IN GOB, AND SHOULD HOW TEAM'S VISIT FITS INTO REGIONAL CONTEXT, AS ELUCIDATED BY THE SECRETARY'S LUSAKA SPEECH. TOO, BRIEFING COULD ALSO DEAL WITH RHODESIAN RAILWAY QUESTION, I.E., EITHER TO SEPARATE IT ENTIRELY FROM PURPOSE OF

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 GABORO 01810 271721Z

TEAM'S VISIT TO TO INCLUDE IT, AS THE DEPARTMENT MAY WISH.

DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT QUESTION ON US ASSISTANCE POSTURE ON RHODESAIN RAILWAY RAISED RECENTLY BY PRESIDENT KHAMA IN RAND DAILY MAIL INTERVIEW (SEE GABORONE 1684-NOTAL).

4. REQUEST DEPARTMENT CONSIDER ADVISABILITY OF PROPOSAL RECOMMENDED ABOVE, AND, AS APPROPRIATE, GIVE EMBASSY AND OSARAC GUIDANCE ON POINTS TO BE MADE IN SAID BRIEFING WITH GOB, EMBASSY AND OSARAC ALSO NEED TO KNOW IF THIS PROJECT IS TRULY REGIONAL IN CHARACTER, I.E., WILL TEAM BE VISITING COUNTRIES OTHER THAN BOTSWANA?

5. TIMING: BECAUSE OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS SEPTEMBER 27 - OCTOBER 3, HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS IN GABORONE ARE NONEXISTANT, FOOD IS SCARACE AND MOST GOB OFFICIALS ARE FULLY CAUGHT UP IN CELEBRATIONS. THEREFORE, SUGGEST, THAT WITH ALLOWANCE FOR EMBASSY BRIEFING OF GOB, RECONNAISSANCE TEAM ARRIVE GABORONE NOT BEFORE OCTOBER 11TH AND PROLONG STAY AS NECESSARY. SINGLE ROOM ACCOMMODATIONS FROM 11TH ON CAN BE MADE HOLIDAY INN.

6. PLEASE ADVISE.

7. WE EXPECT THAT RECONNAISSANCE TEAM WILL BE FULLY BRIEFED IN WASHINGTON CONCERNING THE SENSITIVENESS AND ESCALATED EXPECTATIONS WHICH MIGHT BE CAUSED BY TEAM'S VISIT IF IT IS NOT HANDLED CORRECTLY. (WE REALIZE THAT AID/W IS FULLY AWARE OF THIS PROBLEM, AND CONCUR COMPLETELY WITH THOUGHTS ECPRESSED IN PARA 3 OF REF A). SIMILARLY, WE REQUIRE THAT TEAM BE BRIEFED BY (AND BRIEF) THE EMBASSY AND OSARAC BEFORE IT ESTABLISHES CONTACT WITH ANY ONE ELSE IN BOTSWANA.

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